



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN™

January 11, 2005

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's more than 500,000 members nationwide, I urge you to become a cosponsor of legislation sponsored by Representative Carolyn Maloney that would amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to permit leave to care for a domestic partner, same-sex married partner, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, or grandparent if the domestic partner, same-sex married partner, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, or grandparent has a serious health condition.

Since the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted in 1993, it has helped 35 million Americans take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to care for their new babies and sick family members, and to recover from their own serious illnesses. Many gay and lesbian individuals are in committed, long-term relationships and are financially interdependent with their life partners. In fact, the 2000 Census reported that there are 594,391 same-sex households in the country living in 99.3 percent of all counties in the United States. Yet too many gay men and lesbians simply cannot take advantage of FMLA because their life-partners are not recognized under federal law. This is especially problematic in Massachusetts, where same-sex couples can legally marry, but are denied all federal rights and responsibilities of marriage, including FMLA. Gay men and lesbians experience the same levels of stress, lack of productivity, distraction and fear of job loss as do others when their domestic partners or same-sex married partners become ill and must be hospitalized or cared for by others, and yet they are not guaranteed access to leave to care for them under the FMLA. The result is that many gay and lesbian Americans are unable to take time off from work in family emergencies for fear of losing their jobs. This lack of guaranteed leave places both the employee and their partner at increased risk for stress, financial hardship and job loss.

Representative Maloney's bill would correct this inequity by extending coverage under the FMLA to people taking leave to care for their domestic partner or same-sex married partner with a serious health condition. **This legislation represents simple fairness and we urge you to become an original cosponsor.**

To cosponsor this important legislation, please call Edward J.M. Mills in Congresswoman Maloney's office at 202-225-7944. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please call Barbara Menard of our staff at 202-216-1540.

Sincerely,

Winnie Stachelberg
Political Director

WORKING FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER EQUAL RIGHTS

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